

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 6, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S 128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S 128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski and Senator Shelby:

As you consider final funding levels for this fiscal year, we request your continued support for both the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program and the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program. Both of these programs have proven to be indispensable to law enforcement, and we ask that you fund these programs at the highest possible levels and, at a minimum, preserve the Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) Subcommittee's previously recommended FY 2014 funding levels for these two vital crime-fighting programs.

As you know, in recent years, budget constraints have forced many municipalities to either reduce hiring or lay off public safety officers. New Jersey has felt the impact of federal and state budget cuts on its police force at a time when violence is too common in our cities. While fiscal responsibility requires tough budget decisions at every level of government, public safety must not be compromised in the process. Both the COPS Hiring and Byrne JAG programs are absolutely necessary to ensure that our communities remain safe.

Since its creation, the COPS Hiring Program has assisted over 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 jurisdictions with over \$13 billion in funding to hire more than 125,000 additional officers. In FY 2013, COPS Hiring granted \$127.5 million to 266 communities to hire, preserve, or rehire 955 law enforcement officers, including \$5 million to help New Jersey communities hire 29 officers. In FY 2013, there were heightened restrictions for funding requests leading many communities to forego applications, but of the 1,718 jurisdictions that applied, they requested over \$974 million in funding. Without the restrictions, approximately \$2.9 billion would have been requested. Earlier this year, the CJS subcommittee recommended \$201 million for the COPS Hiring Program, a critically needed increase from the amount appropriated in the previous fiscal year and a small fraction of the demand for this highly successful program. This funding level is a small fraction of the \$1 billion appropriated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and less than the \$298 million previously appropriated in FY 2010. For these reasons, we urge you to fund the COPS Hiring Program at the highest possible level and, at a minimum, at the previously recommended level of \$201 million.

We also ask that you support the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) at the highest possible level. Since its creation, Byrne JAG has processed over 14,000 applications representing more than \$5 billion in funding. In FY 2013, the program distributed over \$280 million to over 1,100 state and local jurisdictions. Byrne JAG provides necessary funding in critical purpose areas, including combating drug and gang violence; reducing recidivism; enhancing drug treatment and enforcement programs; facilitating testing of law enforcement programs; and encouraging best practices while also providing flexibility to localities to react to new circumstances. The CJS subcommittee approved \$385 million in funding for this essential program earlier this year, a fiscally disciplined decision that acknowledged the program's worth while decreasing funding from the \$546 million appropriated in FY 2009 due to fiscal constraints. For these reasons, we also urge you to fund the Byrne JAG Program at or above the previously recommended amount of \$385 million for FY 2014.

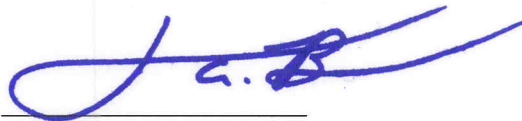
We appreciate the hard work and leadership you have shown on these issues. As the one year anniversary of the Newtown, Connecticut tragedy reminded us, we must strengthen our commitment to local law enforcement. Therefore, as you determine appropriations for these programs, we ask that you support funding for the COPS Hiring Program and the Byrne JAG program at the highest possible levels.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert Menendez".

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Cory A. Booker".

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator